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## INDUSTRIAL TRAINING FOR THE WOUNDED

BY FRANCIS D. PATTERSON, M.D.

Chief, Division of Industrial Hygiene, The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry.

To the unfortunates of war, our industries owe a responsibility which cannot be met merely by the payment of compensation in the form of a government pension. We are face to face with a problem and responsibility which cannot be shirked, because we cannot abate it by relying upon immigration to make up the deficiency in man power, for immigration has ceased, and probably will not be permitted by alien and allied governments within our lifetime; neither can the solution be found by the unlimited employment of women, for while it is undoubtedly true that women can and are replacing men in some positions, by reasons of their sex there are limitations upon the work that they can do. It needs no words of mine to emphasize the importance of the conservation of the health of those who are to be the mothers of our future race.

### THE PROBLEM

The number that we shall have to reconstruct and rehabilitate will depend entirely upon the length of the war and the size of the armed forces in the service of our government. From the experience of the last four years we can at least get an indication as to what awaits us. It has been estimated by the Federal Board for Vocational Education that there are at the present approximately 13,000,000 wounded and crippled soldiers in the belligerent countries of Europe, and of this, 3,000,000 are caused by amputation. In Germany alone it is reported that 500,000 men are under treatment in hospitals, and during 1916 there were 16,000 amputations of the leg. Exclusive of those who died, experience in the past would seem to indicate that 10 per cent of the fighting force will be incapacitated either by wounds or disease, or 100,000 men out of every million men engaged. Of this 100,000 men, 80 per cent can be returned as members of the fighting unit, and the balance, or 20,000

men, will of necessity require vocational re-education to overcome the handicap of either wounds or disease.

From the English experience we can at least get an indication as to what awaits us. We are told that of every 1,000 men returned as unfit for further service, 453 are rendered so by injuries, and 547 by diseases. Thirty-two in the thousand have wholly or partially lost their sight, 49 have lost an arm or leg, 264 have had serious injuries to these limbs, or to the hand, about 50 have been injured in the head, and about 60 have suffered miscellaneous hurts. Of the diseased, the largest total, 124, is accounted for by ailments of the chest, about half being tubercular; the second largest, 110, by diseases of the heart; the third, 67, by what may be called nervous troubles, of which eleven are cases of epilepsy and nine of insanity.

#### THE NEED FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING

(a) *Ensuring of Self-Support.* No self-supporting man who had the misfortune to become either wounded or diseased in the service of his country can subsist upon the government bounty in the form of a pension. Therefore it is essential that he be given such vocational training as will enable him to take his place as a self-supporting and self-respecting member of the community. It is unfortunate that adequate vocational training is not required of all the people in our land before they are permitted of their own volition to select an occupation. It needs no words of mine to emphasize the number of square pegs that are now rattling in the round holes of our present modern industrial structure.

(b) *To Ensure Early Return to an Occupation.* Experience has clearly demonstrated that occupation should be procured for those injured or diseased at the earliest possible moment so as to counteract the tendency to lose interest in a desire for work that so often comes to those who spend a long period of time in a hospital. It is therefore essential that this vocational training should be commenced during the period of convalescence, and that no stone be left unturned to stimulate the interest of the man in his training in his future vocation.

(c) *The Increasing of our Supply of Labor.* It needs no words to emphasize the need upon the part of industry for those cripples who will come to it with the benefit of adequate vocational training: a place in our industrial structure awaits them.

## THE ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM

(a) *The National Program.* The Smith-Sears Vocational Rehabilitation Act, Senate Bill 4557, Second Session, 65th Congress, was approved by the President, June 27, 1918. This bill provides for the vocational rehabilitation and return to civilian employment of disabled persons from the military service, and centralizes the vocational rehabilitation under the Federal Board for Vocational Education, which is, of course, the only rational solution of the problem. This problem is of nation-wide significance, and therefore should be handled by the federal government coöperating with all other agencies.

(b) *The Selection of the Occupation.* The man should be encouraged to select the occupation himself, rather than that some one else should try to guide him into an occupation over the choice of which he has no volition. In choosing this new occupation, it should as far as possible be closely related to work previously performed so that full advantage may be taken of experience and previous training. Care should be taken to encourage the man to choose a standard trade in which there are many and full-time openings, rather than to choose an occupation in which there are only a few workers, or one which is seasonable.

(c) *Place of Training.* The training should, wherever possible, be given close to the home residence of the man, so that he may have the advantage, after his military service, of again being associated with his family and his friends. Too much emphasis cannot be laid upon the importance of the thoroughness of the training so that the man who is only partially trained will not labor at a disadvantage with his fellow workers.

(d) *Securing of Employment.* It is essential that all agencies should coöperate and secure the prompt return to employment of the cripple.